

TEKEL.

THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AND THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE OF TRUTH.

SECOND EDITION, WITH SOME ALTERATIONS.

"AM I, THEREFORE, BECOME YOUR ENEMY, BECAUSE I TELL YOU THE TRUTH."

LONDONDERRY:

PRINTED AT THE SENTINEL OFFICE, 10, PUMP-STREET.

SOLD BY W. MULLAN, JOHN HEMPTON,
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1858.

Though a very large impression of the following Tract was issued at first, the whole has, some time since, been completely exhausted. A Second Edition has been called for from various quarters. In yielding to the call, and bringing a Second Edition before the public, some few alterations have been made, some things not necessary to the argument have been dropped, while some parts have been considerably enlarged that the argument might be more fully exhibited.

T E K E L.

As a general rule, comparisons, either as to individuals or public bodies, are invidious, and to be avoided, Yet circumstances may, and do arise, in which, like many other evils, comparisons become not only lawful, but absolutely necessary to the maintenance of truth and justice. In the reported proceedings of the late meeting of the General Assembly in Londonderry, there occurs one little episode which verifies the truth of this remark, and renders necessary, however otherwise disagreeable, a fair comparative view, on a variety of points, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. On the question being raised anent receiving into the number of the Assembly's licentiates Mr. James Anderson, for a short time licentiate of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, various statements were publicly made—(and what we regard more objectionable)—various unfair and groundless insinuations thrown out, implying what their authors had not the hardihood to assert—which being, as we conceive, calculated injuriously to affect the standing of the Reformed Presbyterian body before the world, justice imperatively demands that they be not passed over in silence, however reluctant we may feel to open any question of controversy with brethren in the Assembly. And we feel that some notice of these statements and insinuations is all the more necessary, inasmuch as this is only one of a series of attacks that have, from time to time, been made, sometimes more openly and sometimes more covertly, by members of the Assembly, on the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church—often made in circumstances in which there was no opportunity to reply, and, therefore, requiring no great amount of courage on the part of the assailants. These attacks have generally been borne in silence, from a feeling that if honoured to maintain the truths and interests of Christ, it is very little matter though men account us as nothing. But when Dr. Edgar and others, in the name and behalf of the Assembly, would not only filch from us our reputation, appropriating even our very reproach, and binding to themselves as badges of honour and distinction, even the epithets of scorn and abuse wherewith the world has loaded us and our fathers, but would deprive us of our very existence, and blandly talk or gruffly frown us out of being, taking it highly amiss that in the presence of their high mightinesses we dared to exist at all, and rating us soundly because we were so stupid as not to know that our day and occupation were gone, and that “like the snowy flake we should melt into their yeast of waves which mar alike” the Seceders’ pride and spoils by Covenanters won, by swallowing up all; it is surely high time under these circumstances to say something for ourselves, and at least protest against allowing any man, or body of men, thus summarily to dispose of us.

In the *Londonderry Standard* of July the 8th, among other things reported as having occurred at the meeting of the Assembly, we find that the Presbytery of Ards “requested that Mr. James Anderson be admitted as a licentiate under that body,” stating “that he had gone through an extensive course of training in the Reformed Presbyterian body, and was licensed

to preach by them." After some kind and complimentary remarks by Dr. Houston, Dr. Killen is reported to have said—"That he would object to the reception of Mr. Anderson, as he had only attended a course equal to about *one year* of the course required by the Assembly." Mr. Johnston (Belfast) "bore high testimony to the character of Mr. Anderson, and said he had gone through a course of study equal to four years," &c., &c. Mr. Rentoul said "that Mr. Anderson had not submitted himself to the certificate committee, nor had he received a degree in arts from any College which they recognised. He believed the time had arrived when their Church should be *most cautious* in receiving into their body young men that did not belong to their body. They required an expensive and lengthened course of training from their own students, and they would admit a young man who had spent only two or three years in America, and had got a license there," &c., &c. After a number of remarks in the same strain from several other members, many of whose names we know from other sources the *Standard* has not inserted at all, Drs. Huston and Brown in the most honourable terms spoke of Mr. Anderson and the early training he had received, the latter observing, "that he believed if they appointed a committee to criticise his (Mr. Anderson's) attainments, they would find that they were as *extensive as those possessed by many who now objected to him*," upon which Dr. Edgar is reported thus to have delivered himself—"I respect my Covenanting brethren as highly as my brother Dr. Brown; they have served their generation very well, *and as to continuing the Covenanting Church any longer in Ireland in our presence*, it is not necessary. And I commend highly the wisdom of our good friend in wisely proposing to unite himself with a Church that is *bearing the same testimony for truth before the world* as our Covenanting brethren, and affording him an opportunity far greater than before of preaching the Gospel and doing good. And I look upon this case as a commencement of what I expect will be going on from year to year, and *I hope soon to see it finished*. For I have no idea whatever that the Covenanting brethren shall continue to *split hairs*, and maintain themselves a separate division of the Church, when by throwing in their weight and influence with an influential body like the General Assembly, they would be able to do far more good than by remaining a separate Church." After several other members of the Assembly had expressed themselves unfavourably to Mr. Anderson's reception, Dr. Cooke said—"He had no doubt of the young man's qualifications, recommended as he had been by Dr. Brown and Dr. Huston. He most highly esteemed the Covenanting Church, and he did not know of any qualification higher than that of a young man taught by a pious Covenanting father. It was better in his opinion than all the degrees in Natural Philosophy and Theology ever granted by a College or University. His esteem for the Covenanting brethren was as sincere as that of Dr. Edgar. *He was as deep a Covenanter as the best of them*, and he agreed with Dr. Edgar that he hoped they would soon cease to be a distinct Church in Ireland," &c., &c.

Now, while we accept as sincere the expressions of respect and esteem these extracts contain, yet looking at their whole drift and bearing, it will appear very obvious to every one who reads them attentively that they involve three very important questions affecting the standing before the world of the two bodies respectively which truth and fairness require to be settled. 1. What is the comparative fulness and perfection of the course

of study prescribed for the ministry in the two bodies respectively? 2. Is it true that the Reformed Presbyterian or Covenanting Church in this land has served its day, and is no longer needed? 3. Has the Assembly or any of its members a right to be regarded as *now* occupying the same ground in point of testimony as the Covenanting Church, and consequently to speak of themselves as Covenanters. These three questions we regard as *forced* on us by what occurred at the Assembly. On these three questions the gauntlet is fairly thrown down by Dr. Edgar and others; and, as we are not afraid on the behalf of the Covenanting Church to take it up, we propose in the following pages to furnish an answer, and we hope to do so in a proper spirit, as our object is not to appeal to prejudice or to awaken passion, but simply to arrive at the truth.

First, then, what is the comparative fulness and perfection of the course of study prescribed for the ministry in the two bodies respectively? In the extracts given above, this question is raised, both by what is directly asserted, and still more by what is indirectly insinuated. And we have reason to believe that there was a vast deal more of the latter commodity than even what appears in the report. Dr. Killen asserts that Mr. Anderson "had only attended a course (of theology, we suppose, he means) equal to one year of the course prescribed by the Assembly;" and then, when the idea was fairly started by a doctor, that perhaps there might be some inferiority in point of education on the part of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, what a host of hints to be cautious—suggestions not to be rash—perhaps—ifs—buts, &c., &c., that did not directly assert inferiority, but, like the deliberate shake of some wise head, gave you to understand that so it might be. And it was no little amusing to see, when the idea of possible inferiority was thus started, what a number of members—composed chiefly of men whose own scholarship is generally believed to be moderate enough, and whose own attainments both in literature and theology, should have suggested to them modesty in speaking about others, rushed *en masse* to hunt it to death. It was a fine opportunity truly, for such men to indulge in a little self-glorification, and to have a nibble at the heels of others, whose scholarship, as Dr. Brown hinted, might be found to be superior to their own, and terrified, some of them, no doubt, felt when they heard their own voice in that august Assembly, and fain were they to slink back into their original obscurity, wondering at their own temerity in having the hardihood to stammer out a sentence at all. As was to be expected, such men as Drs. Cooke, Brown, and Huston, whose own scholarship and attainments are above suspicion, rebuked the unworthy attempt, thus covertly made, to disparage the ministry of a sister Church, and showed that, as no doubt could exist as to Mr. Anderson's qualifications, the only question was simply a point of order—had Mr. Anderson applied in proper form? But why should not the Assembly act in this matter like the Free Church of Scotland? Mr. Anderson would have been admitted into the Free Church at once, on the grounds of his *credentials* alone, that body having agreed to accept the credentials of ministers and licentiates from certain other Churches they have named, the Reformed Presbyterian among the rest. Some such rule would prevent such unseemly exhibitions, so positively insulting to other bodies, and, as Dr. Cooke suggested, so devoid of all good taste and of all kind feeling. As, however, to the point of order involved we *require* to say nothing; and as to the taste, to say nothing of principle, the gentleman concerned displayed, in putting himself into a position in which he and the

Church of his fathers could thus be insulted, we *will* say nothing. At the same time we opine, notwithstanding all the small-talk to the contrary, that there was not much danger of his application being refused. The Assembly in time past has not been so choice, and, moreover, has shown so much eagerness to catch men from the Covenanters, whatever their antecedents may have been, that there was little danger of its refusing a person of Mr. Anderson's character and attainments. And, moreover, we can hardly imagine that a body, whose ministers are constantly inviting to their pulpits and patronising Congregationalists and Baptists, of whom they have no knowledge whatever what education they have received, or whether they have received any at all—many of them the merest tyros and novices—would deliberately reject one of whose fitness no doubt could exist. But it was a fine opportunity for a little talk, and of having a hit at the Covenanters, and some are uncharitable enough to suppose that that was just about as much as the chief actors in the scene intended it to serve. One thing, however, is certain, that whatever was its *design*, its direct *tendency* was to injure Covenanting ministers as a body in the eyes of the public—to disparage before the world their educational attainments, and produce the impression that the ministers of the Assembly had somehow of late wonderfully got the start of, and distanced all competitors. Seriously, however, while we are disgusted by the hollowness and absurdity of such displays, we are not sorry that one of the kind has been shown off on the present occasion, as it will furnish us an opportunity of looking at matters a little more closely.

First, it might safely be asserted *a priori* that there is no danger, *with her present membership*, of the Covenanting Church having an inferior ministry. Her members have generally been so trained in the knowledge of truth and principle, and those acceding to her from other religious communities are generally persons of such reading and intelligence, that they would not tolerate a ministry of inferior order. Hence it is a fact, often witnessed in the past, that preachers who could not succeed in obtaining congregations in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, have been very acceptable to congregations in the Assembly, and, moreover, that persons of other religious communities have not been slow to confess that, for copiousness of doctrinal truth, fulness of Scriptural illustration, and general excellence both of matter and style, few preachers in any Church equalled the humble Covenanting minister. These things we say in no spirit of vain boasting. If the depreciatory remarks uttered at the Assembly had been directed only against an individual, most readily would any minister in our body have said, "To me *who am less than the least of all saints* is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." But, when it is sought to fasten a charge of inferiority on a whole body, in the face of the amplest evidence to the contrary, it is no unworthy boasting to proclaim facts to the world, the truth of which will be universally recognised. At least, we can plead with Paul, "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me."

Secondly, that the matter may be fully understood, we shall compare, from the Assembly's "Code," and the printed "Plan of Education" of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the two courses.

The course of ministerial education naturally divides itself into three

parts—namely, the preparation necessary for entering college—literary and philosophical collegiate studies—and course of theology. In the first of these very little difference exists in the course prescribed by the two bodies respectively. The same subjects in English literature, and the same books in classics are to be the subjects of examination in both cases, with some trifling difference as to the amount of the book that must have been read. The Assembly, indeed, requires that the student at this stage shall know something of Hebrew, which, however, is merely nominal, and sometimes we believe hardly reaches the length of the student being able to name the Hebrew letters. In the Reformed Presbyterian Church, however, the student is not only examined at this stage upon English and classical literature, but likewise as to “his attainments in the knowledge of the Scriptures, the subordinate standards, and his attention to personal religion.” In this way it is ascertained how far the training by a Covenanting father, of which Dr. Cooke spoke so highly, as being better than any degree in arts or theology granted by college or university, has been effectual to give the candidate right views of Scripture truth, make him familiar with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Confession and Testimony, as also what evidence the young man has of being under the power of true religion, and of having proper motives and views in looking forward to the ministry. The Covenanting student has great advantage here, there being scarcely ever a case of a young man entering college who could not repeat the Larger as well as the Shorter Catechism, and who is not familiar with the Confession of Faith, the Covenants and Testimony of the Church.

Again as to the course of philosophy at college, the Assembly requires *three* sessions :—

First session,	each student is to study	Hebrew, Greek and Logic.
Second session,	“	“ Hebrew, Moral Philosophy and Mathematics.
Third session	“	“ Natural Philosophy, Irish and Elocution.

And passing an examination on these entitles him to a degree in arts required by the Assembly.

In the Reformed Presbyterian Church it is required in their “plan,” that the course at college shall be *four* sessions :—

Order of study—	First session,	Latin, Greek, Logic, and Belles Lettres.
“	“	Second session, Junior Mathematics, Moral Philosophy, Elocution, and Hebrew.
“	“	Third session, Senior Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Hebrew.
“	“	Fourth session, Chemistry, Natural History, Hebrew and if possible Church History,

Now looking at these two courses, it will be quite obvious that the advantage is altogether, as we believe it ever has been, on the side of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. It will be seen that that body requires, in this part of her curriculum, *a session more* than the Assembly requires, and that no less than *four* classes enter into her

plan that do not enter into their so much prized degree in arts at all, viz., Latin, Senior Mathematics, Chemistry, and Natural History—the last embracing Geology, Botany, and Zoology, without a knowledge of which no man can properly be said to be educated up to the requirements of the age. Hebrew also, it will be observed, is to be studied *three* sessions in the Reformed Presbyterian Church's plan against *two* in the Assembly's. And as our course is in all these respects very superior, so care is taken in every stage that the student be thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of it. After each session he is closely examined on the subjects of study it embraced, and essays connected with each subject are prescribed, which, when submitted to Presbytery, furnish proof of his attainments. And our plan provides "that the Presbytery shall have the power, and it will be their duty, to remand the student to the further study of any branch on which he may be found to be deficient." And the whole is followed by the final Synodical examination, embracing everything from English reading to Theology, conducted by persons specially appointed to take up and examine on each branch separately.

Again, as to the department of Theology, Dr. Killen asserted that Mr. Anderson, and, consequently, all our students, "had attended a course equal to about *one year* of the course required by the Assembly." Mr. Johnson took a different view of the matter, and asserted that Mr. Anderson "had gone through a course of study equal to *four years*." How these two gentlemen arrived at so different conclusions from the same premises it is not easy to tell. Perhaps one of them was looking through the glass *prejudice*, which an English satirist says has the effect of so wonderfully magnifying our own perfections and diminishing the perfections of others. Be that as it may, we are not afraid to compare notes with Dr. Killen, nor afraid to compare *men* either.

In the "Code" the Assembly requires *three sessions* to be spent in the study of Theology, Biblical Criticism, Hebrew, and Church History. It is but fair, however, to state that since the opening of the Assembly's Theological Institution in Belfast, we believe *four* sessions are required. But then some of the classes are not purely theological, and when you deduct these, the present attendance of students on theological studies comes up, we believe, to about the requirements of the Code, namely, *three* sessions. In the Reformed Presbyterian body *four* sessions must be devoted to theology—but there is this difference that while the session extends, in the Assembly to something above *five* months, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church it is only *two*. But the advantage here is only apparent. If examined a little more closely it will be found that *four* sessions of *two* months each may be far superior to *three* sessions of *five* months each. In the Reformed Presbyterian Church there is not, at any one time, a large number of students attending the hall—seldom more than five or six. Now, it is quite obvious that two diligent and laborious professors, having charge only of five or six students, and keeping them incessantly employed and exercised in studies purely theological, will be able to overtake, in the real training of this small number, more actual work, than with a large number, they could, in twice the time. How frequently will each student be under examination in one case compared with the other, and how little time will be spent in reading and criticising the essays of the students in the one case compared with the other? In

fact, the principle is so plain that it is understood in every school. And students of the Assembly, who have occasionally attended our classes, have freely confessed that there was no comparison as to the amount of work accomplished in the same time, in the one case and the other. Some, moreover, of our ministers who attended the theological class in Edinburgh, and also studied under the late Dr. Andrew Symington, of Paisley, can attest that there was more real work in lecturing, examination, and essay writing, overtaken in the Hall in Paisley in one week than was in a month in Edinburgh. Our sessions, therefore, we hold to be at least fully equal, if not superior, to those required by the Assembly; and as we have a session more than they, our theological course is superior to theirs. Besides, there is a very extensive course of intersessional reading and study prescribed at the end of each session, on which the students are closely examined at the commencement of the next—almost, as students have often alleged, as extensive, and requiring as much study, as the session itself, while during the whole period of study the student is regularly exercised by his Presbytery.

It may be said that the Assembly has a greater number of classes and professors in its institution. Of that, however, we are not disposed to make much account. Some of these classes are not theological at all; and notwithstanding their *sacredness*, we are just as irreverent about them as the Assembly itself. One of the “sacreds” the Assembly was so profane as to extinguish, and after such a sacrilegious act it cannot blame us if we regard some other of its “sacreds” with no very devout feelings. Some of them, we have no doubt, considering the men they have often to operate on, may be useful accessories to the study of Divinity. For example, such a class as “Sacred Rhetoric” may be highly useful to young men who are not familiar with their Bible, nor have learned to repeat the Shorter Catechism; for such raw youths it may be invaluable as a preparation, and we know no man more fitted to mould such materials into shape than the worthy Doctor who has it in charge; but for youths who have enjoyed the training by pious Covenanting fathers, so much extolled at the Assembly, perhaps it would not be necessary. Nor have we any doubt but that Dr. Cooke’s experience in “Sacred Catechetics”—having made him acquainted with some rather strange specimens of aspirants to clerical honours—may have greatly contributed to give him such high notions of the value of religious parental training. At the same time, we cannot accept of his defence, if it be understood to detract in any way from the value to be justly set upon a thorough system of collegiate education; or if it be construed to mean that Dr. Cooke would be prepared to accept Covenanting licentiates on the ground of their superior home-training alone, even though their College curriculum had been inferior. We insist that in no respect is our educational course inferior to the Assembly’s, while in some respects its greater fulness must be acknowledged; and Dr. Cooke may mention, if he pleases, in favour of Covenanting students, as an additional advantage, the religious training they have enjoyed.

Taking into account the above facts, and that at license our young men must be prepared to read the sacred originals *ad aperiendum*, and that seven pieces of trial, extending in preparation and delivery over a period of nine months, are required before license is granted, we hold that our course of theological training is superior to that required in the Assembly, as a com-

parison of our men, in point of theological attainments, would very satisfactorily prove.

The education, therefore, received by candidates for the ministry in our Church we are not prepared to admit to be inferior to that received by those of *any other Church in the world*, while it is, both in Literature and Theology, superior to that prescribed by many ecclesiastical bodies in these lands—the Assembly amongst the rest; and when parties in the Assembly seek to fasten a charge, either by insinuation or otherwise, upon the Reformed Presbyterian body, we would advise them to look out for some point in which she could be more easily assailed.

The correctness of the above comparison can easily be tested by referring to the documents we have quoted. Any of our ministers will be happy to supply any enquirer on the subject with a copy of our “Plan of Education.” The fact, however, seems to have been that many members of the Assembly spoke in utter ignorance of what is the course of study prescribed in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We hope they will make themselves better informed before they volunteer a similar attack.

Let it, however, be distinctly understood that we do not by anything we have said wish to make the impression that we consider our Church, or any other, to be “already perfect” in respect to ministerial education. A thoroughly educated ministry is an imperative necessity of the age, and as the masses advance so must the Church. No course of education can, therefore, be regarded so perfect but that improvements may afterwards be required. Accordingly, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland has had, for some time past, under consideration, in overture, a still more enlarged plan of education for the ministry than that from which we have quoted; and, instead of drawing invidious comparisons, or compelling others to draw them in self-defence, it would be better if all parties were steadily pressing forward to higher attainments.

But, secondly—Is it true that the Covenanting Church has served its day, and is no longer required in these lands? So says Dr. Edgar—“They have served their generation well, and as to continuing the Covenanting Church any longer in Ireland *in our presence, it is not necessary.*” Again—“I have no idea that our Covenanting brethren shall continue to *split hairs*, and maintain themselves a separate division of the Church,” &c. Dr. Cooke also hoped that they (the Covenanters) would soon cease to be a distinct Church in Ireland.” Now, before entering on the question here raised, one cannot help remarking the very offensive and insulting style in which Dr. Edgar expresses his hopes and propounds his views relative to the Covenanting Church. While we were perfectly aware that charity and liberality of feeling are things none need expect from Dr. Edgar for anything outside the Assembly; and moreover, if what his own brethren are from week to week writing in the newspapers about his sarcasms and unfairness be true, he does not display a large amount of those Christian graces for anything inside either—yet we confess we were not prepared for anything, even from Dr. Edgar, so intolerant and offensive. “As to continuing the Covenanting Church any longer in Ireland *in our presence, it is not necessary.*” Such language we cannot but regard both as presumptuous towards God and excessively arrogant and intolerant

towards ourselves. He admits that the Covenanting Church has served her generation well. If so, she must have had her day and her work. And who gave her that day and work? Who but the Church's Head; and if He is still in His wisdom, continuing her, not only in existence, but in health and vigour, how presumptuous for Dr. Edgar to say to Him, "What doest Thou?" How does Dr. Edgar know what work God has for the Covenanting Church yet to do?—perhaps suffering, witnessing work, such as she has already performed so well. According to Dr. Edgar's principle, when the Reformation burst with a flood of light and glory on the world, the Waldensian Church should have been discontinued, having served her day; or, at least, should have been blended with the Reformed Churches, as being no longer needed. Yet God has continued the Waldensian Church, distinct and independent—not even bearing the name Protestant. And who can tell what mighty work she has yet to accomplish? Such presumptuous pronouncing on God's work deserves to be rebuked. "Art thou wiser than He?"

How haughty and arrogant towards man, also, is such a summary way of disposing of a sister Church? Who gave Dr. Edgar the power to arraign us at his bar, and pronounce sentence of extinction upon us? and what if we should refuse to be judged by his judgment? And then the great swelling words of vanity in which he expresses his hopes of our speedy extinction. "*In our presence.*" It is not easy exactly to tell what Dr. Edgar meant by this phrase. Perhaps he was speaking after the manner of kings and editors, and used the words personally of himself; or the thought might be that the Irish Assembly was destined to be Ireland's great ecclesiastical maelstrom, which was to suck in and swallow up everything coming within its reach, and that we could only secure our safety by keeping at a respectful distance. We cannot tell which of these ideas was present to his mind. The expression is an ambiguous one, and we would be guilty of nothing unfair towards the doctor did we put any construction on it that the words would seem to bear. Without, however, taking advantage of this ambiguity to put constructions upon it, which, though possessed of verisimilitude, might be taken as indicating a desire to give offence, there is one thing we know, and beg to assure him of, Dr. Edgar is grievously mistaken if he supposes that the General Assembly has been, is, or shall be, for a long time to come, in a position to swallow up the Covenanting Church in Ireland. That there should be persons like Mr. Anderson, occasionally passing from the one body to the other, is what is to be expected, considering that we locally occupy the same country, and hold many things in common, yet we will venture to assert that, taking the whole membership of the two bodies into account, for every one person passing from the Reformed Presbyterian Church into the General Assembly, there are half-a-dozen passing from the Assembly into the Reformed Presbyterian Church. And the gain we hold to be all on our own side. The persons who go from us to the Assembly, it is to be feared, go generally on the principle that Dr. Edgar so dolorously laments, as taking many of his own community yearly to the Established Church—namely, worldly convenience, connections, or advantage. It is obvious that they cannot go because they object to *our* principles, or to improve *their own*, for Dr. Edgar says that the Assembly "*bears the same testimony for truth,*" as we; and Dr. Cooke says that "*he is as deep a Covenantanter as any of them.*"—What can it be, then, that takes them but to improve their worldly posi-

tion? As to what Dr. Edgar asserts about Mr. Anderson "being afforded in the Assembly an opportunity far greater than before, of preaching the Gospel and doing good," it is all sheer nonsense. There is as much opportunity for preaching, visiting, catechising, and doing good in the Reformed Presbyterian Church as any man can possibly embrace, and for amount of preaching and other ministerial labours actually performed, and general usefulness, Covenanting ministers are generally admitted to be certainly not inferior, but in most cases vastly superior to many of their brethren in the Assembly. The persons, on the other hand, passing into the Reformed Presbyterian Church are, before being received, minutely examined, if it be from conviction and principle that they seek to make the change—a course we would recommend to the Assembly in future in such cases, and which would be of unspeakably more advantage to the party concerned than the insulting remarks to which Mr. Anderson was subjected. A close and searching scrutiny of the person's motives and reasons for making a change would be a vast improvement on such scenes as that to which we have adverted.

As, however, the ways of the human heart are strange, we would not wonder if the incident was suggestive to Dr. Edgar's mind of the disreputable winding up of the history of the Secession in Ireland. Perhaps he was remembering how well the Seceders had begun, and how beneficial their mission had been in this country for a time, till violating the most solemn agreements and breaking faith with the people, they left the ground, once nobly occupied, by accepting endowments long and violently denounced as corrupting and ensnaring; and how gradually thereafter they lost their moral prestige, grew more and more loose in their views, and lax in their discipline, till the prospect of a little addition to their *donum*, in being equalized with their envied rivals of the Synod of Ulster—completely bore down all that remained of distinguishing principle or practice, and led them finally to abandon a once noble position. Perhaps some such thoughts as these were troubling his conscience, and he felt as if the fidelity of Covenanters to the principles they had avowed from the first, was a tacit reproach upon his own proceedings, and the wish being father to the thought, he fancied that the time was near, when ceasing to maintain their position, they would no longer be suggestive to him of unpleasant memories. Perhaps as the two witnesses "*tormented them that dwelt on the earth,*" that they rather would not have had the witnesses in their presence at all, so Dr. Edgar felt tormented a little that Covenanters should still witness for truths, once embraced in the Seceders' testimony, but which he and his party deliberately abandoned for a little worldly advantage. Hence he would rather not have Covenanters and their testimony "*in his presence,*" and perhaps if he were to speak out all that he feels, he would say that "*to continue the Covenanting Church in his presence*" is not only "*not necessary,*" but is *intolerably cruel*. And so no doubt it is. But never mind, dear Doctor—we all have our trials you know, and must just make up our mind to bear them as patiently as we can. You know that notwithstanding the impropriety of the thing, Lazarus *did* lie at the gate of the rich man, and however great the ecclesiastical impropriety and presumption of a handful of despised Covenanters coming betwixt the wind and your nobility, we fear that for reasons we proceed to specify, you must overcome your disgust and make up your mind to bear us a little longer in "*your presence.*"

But to proceed with our inquiry—it is a fact that the Covenanting Church has had both a noble historic position and a most beneficial mission in these lands. She has never professed to be a Seceding body like the Secession or Relief Churches. Her origin she traces to the times of the Second Reformation, and the persecution that succeeded it. As any person may learn who consults an impartial history of the Church of Scotland, at the time when the bloody house of Stuart sought to bend that then Covenanted body to its own will, her ministers, after lengthened conflicts with the Court, became divided in sentiment as to how far the offers of the King, granting, in virtue of his Royal prerogative, indulgences to ministers to preach and exercise their ministerial functions, on certain conditions, should be accepted. The ministers generally did accept these indulgences, sinful and dishonourable as the acceptance was, and thereby secured their own ease and freedom from suffering, while a small minority refused, alleging that as they had already a commission from Christ, they needed not a license from a tyrant of earth, and, when forbidden to preach, replied like the Apostles—“We ought to obey God rather than man.” This small band of rigid and strict Covenanters were, consequently, most ruthlessly persecuted for many a year, and supplied the martyrs to whom many whose indulged forefathers never shed a drop of blood, are now so fain to claim kindred. They were driven out from the habitations of men to the mountain and moor; hence they were called “*Mountain men*”—a term of reproach long borne by the members of our body, which they got from those persecuted fathers. They were also called “*Cameronians*”—a term still applied to members of the Covenanting body, from Richard Cameron, for a time one of their leading ministers, who maintained on mountain and moor for many years, those religious conventicles for preaching and dispensing the sacraments which Government laboured so strenuously to suppress. Now, during the hottest of this persecution various of the Scottish ministers passed over into Ireland. Alexander Peden and others laboured in Ulster for a time, and found many among the Irish Presbyterians who applauded their courage in continuing to preach the Gospel in the face of royal proclamations, and who condemned not only the indulgences in Scotland, but the temporising policy of the body of Irish Presbyterians as unfaithful to their Covenant. By the labours of Peden and those other ministers, a party of strict adherents to the Covenanted Reformation, the same in spirit and principle as the Mountain-men or Covenanters in Scotland, was formed, who, through many vicissitudes, having obtained help of God, have continued to the present day witnessing both to small and great, none other things than those which Reformers and Martyrs did say, and claiming to occupy precisely the same grounds as the ancient Church of Scotland in her purest times of Reformation attainments. At the Revolution under William III., the remains of this persecuted party both in Scotland and Ireland hoped, laboured, and prayed that the backsliding Churches would return to former Covenanted ground, by reviving the acknowledgment of the Solemn League and Covenant so solemnly sworn. Accordingly, in 1689, the year after the nation had been freed from the tyranny of the Stuarts, and the year after the little band had lost its last martyr, James Renwick, they met, many from Ireland joining with their brethren in Scotland, and renewed the British Covenants, that by example as well as by exhortation and remonstrance, they might help to bring back the Churches and nation to their former covenanted position. It was, however, unhappily in vain. That large

part of the Church of Scotland that had formerly accepted the indulgences now accepted the revolution settlement in Church and State, although it avowedly set aside the second Reformation and all its attainments, by retaining the act rescissory which denounced the Covenants as treasonable, and their supporters as traitors; by setting up prelacy in England and Ireland, and by taking for its model, upon which to establish the Church of the Revolution in Scotland, not the times of her highest attainments, but the period of 1592, when the Church was only in her minority, thus abandoning all that for which her martyrs had suffered. What could the remnant of faithful Covenanters now do? Hetherington, while applauding their fidelity in renewing their Covenant, thinks, nevertheless, that they should have gone into the Revolution Church. But surely if the men who now form the Free Church found the Revolution Church so essentially bad, that in faithfulness they were forced to come forth from it, such a fact is the best vindication of the Covenanters in having from the first steadily refused to go into it all. Though forsaken by their three ministers they remained firm; and, making use of a most perfect plan of religious society that had been organised at the death of Cargill, from which they were long called "Society people," and which is still retained among Covenanters as a part of their congregational organisation, they maintained themselves in being, and even increased in number, till in 1706, Rev. John M'Millan acceded to them from the Established Church, from whom they were for a time called M'Millanites. Shortly after, they renewed the Covenants in 1712, and again in 1745, and thus made good their claim not only to the name Covenanters, but to occupy the very ground taken by the whole Church of Scotland during the period of the second Reformation. From the first, this remnant in Scotland kept up correspondence with adherents in Ireland, and not only before the Revolution, but from time to time after it, their ministers laboured in this country, first organising societies and afterwards congregations, which having obtained ministers from Scotland, a Presbytery was constituted in Ireland so early as 1764. Thus the Covenanting body, not, as represented by some, springing up in late years as a new sect in Ireland, but tracing up its history through M'Millan, and Peden, and Renwick, the Society people, and Cargill, and Cameron, to the times when God's covenanted witnesses, in fidelity to their Master, were compelled to separate from the defections of the times, claims a historical position more ancient and honourable than any ecclesiastical body in the land.

And, having thus such a high and honourable historic position, the Covenanting Church in Ireland has also had a most beneficial providential mission, as even impartial historians of other religious communities have not been slow to confess, and which Dr. Edgar himself acknowledges when he says, "they have served their generation well." And, by the way, even on his own showing, would not Dr. Edgar be treating her very inhumanly by summarily cutting her off, like a Hindoo, even though she were become feeble by old age, if it be true that she has performed her part so well in the past? Would it not be fair and human to allow her, after such honourable service, like an old veteran, to repose a little in her laurels and live out her time, instead of throwing her into any such ecclesiastical Ganges, or choking her with the sacred water and mud of the Assembly? But her work and mission, we hold, is still far from being complete.

1. She is still needed to hold fast and testify for great principles as yet but partially admitted or imperfectly applied. A few of these may be specified. *The mediatorial rule of Christ over the nations*—a truth for which the Covenanted Church long contended single-handed even against many professed friends of our reformation cause. While many now admit this principle in the abstract, few hold it practically by applying it as a rule to regulate their political proceedings, relations, and connections in keeping with their allegiance to Christ. Again, the *supremacy of the Bible as the law of Christ*, and that politically and nationally, as well as in our private relations, and, in keeping with this principle, the *imperative obligation resting on lunds favoured with revelation to set up as rulers only such as are Scripturally qualified*. Members of the Assembly will, no doubt, think it hard that we should insinuate that they, as a body, do not firmly and fully hold these great principles, but we distinctly allege that they do not apply them—that is, hold them practically. Let our brethren look calmly at this matter. If Christ be King of nations by the Father's appointment, then nations are bound to obey him; and if His law be supreme, they are bound to consult that law, and bring their policy into conformity with its enactments. And if they refuse to do the one or the other, they must be rebels against lawful authority. Now accordingly Britain must be a rebel against Christ, for she sets another law—political expediency—above His, and moreover, supports, encourages, and endows, His open and avowed enemies—Papists, Socinians, and idolaters. Now can we enter into close incorporation with rebels in the very capacity in which they are rebels—namely, politically, and yet be true to the sovereignty of Christ and the supremacy of His law? We think it impossible, and so did our Covenanted fathers of the Second Reformation. They refused to admit malignants—namely, errorists and known enemies of Christ—into political power, and the Solemn League bound them, and us, too, not to incorporate with any such. And it will be remembered that this very question—Can we co-operate in national concerns, in close political union, with malignants?—gave rise to the dispute—first between the Engagers and Covenanters, and afterwards between the Resolutioners and Protesters. Now, Hetherington admits that the Covenanters and Protesters were right in principle and consistent in practice. He says of the men who refused to sanction the engagement—"They felt the deep power of the Covenant upon their souls too mighty for any earthly consideration to shake." And, again, "That the *genuine* Covenanters could not unite with such men will excite neither wonder nor surprise in the minds of those who can appreciate their principles." Well, if the Protesters against such political confederacy were right—if Gillespie and Rutherford, pillars of the Reformation and chief among the Protesters, truly supported Bible principles, as they pled on Covenant and Scripture grounds, for no incorporation with the enemies of Christ—how can we hold the principles of the Second Reformation, and consistently incorporate in the British Parliament with Roman Catholics, and Infidels, and Quakers, and Jews, many of them the avowed enemies of Christ and his reign? Practically, such a step denies that such reformers were right, and such incorporation with rebels is wholly inconsistent with maintaining the mediatorial dominion of Christ over the nations—their obligation to obey Him, and the supremacy in all things of His law—and to speak of holding the one while we are doing the other is simply a practical absurdity. These great principles the Reformed Presbyterian Church has ever endeavoured to hold practically as well as in theory, often

through much reproach and suffering, and it is in no little measure due to her fidelity and zeal in testifying for them so earnestly that they have experienced in other bodies anything of a resurrection in the present day, though still very imperfectly applied in many quarters where their abstract truth is acknowledged. Again, the *perpetual obligation on the British nation of the Solemn League and Covenant*, in which the nation solemnly avouched God, and bound itself perpetually to maintain, both in Church and State, our Presbyterian Reformation Settlement. For this great practical principle the Covenanted Church has been raised up especially to testify, and this principle we know no Church in the present day formally to avow, as part of its creed, but the Reformed Presbyterian Church and a small body of Original Seceders.

2. The Covenanting Church is still needed to lead forward many other ecclesiastical bodies to farther steps of reform. It is a lamentable fact that just in proportion as the different ecclesiastical bodies in these lands fell away from owning the obligation of our national covenants they have fallen into many grievous errors and irregularities. This was particularly the case with the Presbyterian body in Ireland, from which our fathers separated of old. She let go her Covenant, and then fell into the grossest errors and most fearful immoralities. During the last forty years, however, there has been the most gratifying reaction, and many steps of most valuable reform have consequently been taken. In witnessing these the Covenanted Church most sincerely rejoices, and to all these she has by her testimony and practice most materially contributed. The reforms, however, to which others are coming up by degrees she has received two hundred years ago from martyr fathers, and what advanced position in particular does the Assembly now occupy that Covenanters did not occupy from the first? We shall take a few specimens of things justly mentioned with satisfaction as steps of modern reform. First, *swearing only in the use of a Scriptural form by raising the hand to God*, now, we are most happy to know, pretty generally used by Presbyterians, though it was not always so. Well, Covenanters never swore in any other form, and, rather than sanction an unscriptural manner of swearing, often refused to make oath at all. Again, the *exclusive use of inspired psalms in the praise of God*, now very generally advocated by Presbyterians. Covenanters never sung anything else, nor lowered the praise of God by using hymn or paraphrase. Again, the *public dispensation of baptism*, from which Presbyterians had so sadly fallen away, and to which they are now so happily returning. Covenanters never dispensed baptism in private. A single case of private baptism established against any minister would have subjected him to immediate suspension. Again, the *orderly celebration of marriage*, in relation to which Presbyterian ministers had gone to such excesses of irregularity that Parliament was compelled to interfere. Covenanters never celebrated a marriage but according to the order agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly, namely, after three days' proclamation of banns. Again, the *proper sanctification of the Sabbath*. Covenanters always insisted upon its being so carefully observed as often to be ridiculed for excessive exactness. Again, *faithful contending for the rights of man against slavery*. In America the Reformed Presbyterian Church has from the first made it a term of communion never to admit a slaveholder. Again, the *regular practice of family religion*, so universal at the period of the Second Reformation, and from which Presbyterians had

so lamentably fallen that not many years ago even ministers and elders were to be found who did not make a practice of worshipping God in their families, and the observance of which is in the body at large even yet only the exception, not the rule, notwithstanding all the laudable efforts made to revive it. Well, Covenanters always made its observance a term of communion, and each family must be known to be living regularly in its practice. Again, the *regular maintenance of social meetings for prayer*, which the Assembly is laudably attempting to promote. Covenanters have had the very best organization for social prayer and spiritual conference among members, which they got more than two hundred years ago from the "Society people." Again, the *regular appointment and ordination of ruling elders*, to which we are happy to see the Assembly come back after great irregularities. Covenanters never departed from this Scriptural order and practice. And, lastly, *Christian liberality in supporting the Gospel*, which the Assembly is now labouring to bring to something like a Scriptural standard. Covenanters, however imperfect, have set a noble example of supporting the ministry. At present the rule for weak and aid-receiving congregations is, that they must contribute at an average of *ten shillings* per communicant for ministerial support, and it is expected that self-supporting congregations will not remain below that scale, while some congregations are actually contributing above one pound per communicant. At the same time, their contributions to missions are, in proportion to number and means, far above the scale of liberality to be found in almost any other Church, as our annual reports fully show. To all these things, to which other Churches have been slowly coming up, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has been pointing the way, and thankful she is that her testimony has not been altogether in vain. At the same time, is it not due to her to admit that every step of reform, by which the Assembly has come nearer her position, is a fresh proof that her position is right? For many of the principles and practices above specified she has had long to contend, and for the peculiarity of many of them she was often scoffed at and ridiculed in no measured terms by the very parties who are now adopting them themselves, so that wisdom is at length being justified of her children, and those who once mocked and opposed are compelled to vindicate the excellence of the position, she has long and honourably maintained.

While, however, cordially rejoicing in all that has been done, we cannot admit that the Covenanting Church is not still needed to point the way to further reform. Amongst others, the following may be specified:—1. *The proper manner of admitting to Sealing Ordinances—namely, by Scriptural terms of communion*. From the first the Reformed Presbyterian Church has admitted to Sealing Ordinances only upon the applicants acceding to certain terms of communion. These terms embrace two points. First, the avowed belief in the Scriptural system of doctrine exhibited in her Covenants, Westminster Standards, and Testimony; and, secondly, the distinct agreement to live in all godly practice, including the duties of personal, family, social, and public religion. And this, she thinks, precisely accords, not only with the practice of the Old Church of Scotland, but with that of the Apostle's, whose converts are said to "have continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." In the Assembly, however, it is otherwise. In it there are tests of orthodoxy for ministers and elders, but none for private members, and while duty is preached in its obligation, it is not enforced in its practice.

as a term of communion, without which Sealing Ordinances would be withheld. The consequences of this are very sad, as the statistics of many congregations would shew, in which, perhaps, out of hundreds of families, only a few—sometimes very few—are living in the regular practice of family religion, and even ruling elders scarcely ever bowing their knees with their families before God. Whilst, however, ministers and sessions take the easy way of managing matters—namely, by telling the people their duty, and exhorting them to perform it—thus, as they think, exonerating themselves and throwing the whole responsibility on the people; and whilst they allow an individual passing from another congregation or religious community to enjoy full privilege upon his just taking a sitting and paying a contribution, without scrutiny as to faith, morals, or practice of godliness, a principle is adopted most fatal to purity of communion. But, would you, it is asked, *force* men to be religious? Yes, certainly, by all proper moral and spiritual forces. The terrors of God's law are a legitimate force, and so is the love of Christ; it "constrains," and so are Scriptural rules and terms of admission to sealing ordinances. "Now we command you," says Paul, "to withdraw yourselves from every brother who walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition received from us;" and this tradition undoubtedly was just the same as that already referred to, "to continue steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, fellowship, and prayers."

Again, in the *full and faithful exercise of discipline*, the Assembly's congregations require farther reform. Covenanters have been and still are mocked for their strictness in taking cognizance of offences, and making them matters of ecclesiastical discipline, that others regard as trifling.—Instead, however, of relaxing, Covenanters would study increased faithfulness in this important particular, and we know nothing would contribute more to the healthy progress of the Assembly's congregations, in life and spirituality, than a fuller and more faithful application of discipline to many cases and kinds of irregularity and ungodliness hitherto almost unnoticed. We could easily specify many such cases; suffice it to say, that hitherto scarcely anything has been made a matter of discipline in most of the Assembly's congregations but breaches of the seventh commandment, while the readiness often displayed to receive, without question, fugitives from the discipline of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, has often rendered it more difficult to maintain it there in healthy operation.

Another step in reform we would endeavour to bring our brethren to take would be the *ceasing to employ to teach their congregations men whom in consistency they must consider to be erroneous in sentiment and principle*.—We have already referred to the fact, that members of the Assembly freely invite to their pulpits, to teach their people, Congregationalists, and Baptists; and the time is not long past when even Methodists—known to be of Armenian sentiments—were to be found occasionally in the pulpits of Presbyterian ministers. Now, while we know that Covenanters have got no small measure of reproach for their so-called exclusiveness and illiberality, because they would not mingle freely with men of all hues of creed in public religious exercises, and sing hymns with one class, and read prayers with another, and homologate sentiments, and approve of practices in others, inconsistent with their own standards; yet we hold their course is the only consistent one, be it called by what bad names it may. To see this verified just calmly look at what is actually involved in a Presbyterian minister asking to his pulpit a Baptist. He in doing so

asks to teach his Presbyterian people one who not only ignores their Presbyterianism, but who, if he teach them all that he believes necessary to their salvation, must teach them what their own Confession of Faith most strongly condemns. He must teach them that they are an unbaptized mob, not having the seal of Christianity on them, and that their first duty is to repent, believe, and *be baptised*. Ignoring their baptism, he must, in consistency, deny that they have the other sacrament; for Baptists, in common with almost, we believe, all Churches, hold that unbaptized persons cannot be admitted to or celebrate the Lord's Supper. Therefore, he teaches that Presbyterian congregation that it has neither of the sacraments, and consequently is no part of the Christian Church, or he suppresses what he believes to be true and necessary to salvation. Now, how erroneous all this according to their own standards. We do hope that Presbyterian ministers and people will awake to the absurdity of such a thing; and while there were men in the Assembly who could hint the necessity of caution in receiving a licentiate from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, they will take the hint and cease to patronise men whom, according to their own standards, they must hold to be unsound in the faith. The Presbyterians of Ireland in the times of the Covenant acted not thus, for, as Reid well shows, when Armenians and Baptists attempted to shew their face in any locality, the most strenuous efforts were made to suppress their erroneous teachings. We know that it will be said that, in the practice to which we object, there is really, after all, no danger, as the preacher, it is understood, will confine himself strictly to the Gospel, and not introduce disputed points. But do not the points on which we differ from Baptists and Armenians belong to the Gospel? Is there not "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism" in the Gospel? And truly we do not envy the state of conscience in those who either expect that others will be guided by such tacit compacts, or submit to them in their own practice. The person submitting to any such an understanding as that he will avoid certain points, cannot say with Paul, "I have *not shunned* to declare the *whole counsel* of God." All this may be thought very uncharitable, but really after all there is so much uncharitable charity abroad in the world—so much spurious and loathsome liberality—that we have no desire to be charitable or liberal after the fashion of some. We wish for no charity that is not consistent with truth. The liberality that teaches a man to set at nought his own avowed creed—that leads him to regard his own solemnly professed principles, as a thing of trifling importance which he may practically trample upon at pleasure, when it serves a worldly purpose—we most heartily despise. The intolerance, moreover, of the men who deny that we are even baptized—hold us an unbaptized mass of unconverted professors, and must in consistency deny that we have a sacrament at all, and thus virtually unchurch us, deserves little charity at our hands, and we have no sympathy with the inconsistency of those who, by patronising such, pull Presbyterianism down with the one hand while they build it up with the other.

Another most important advance on her present position to which we yet hope to see the Assembly brought is, the *acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League on themselves and these lands*. This she does not own in any of her formulas. We were rejoiced to see, a number of years ago, that an association of ministers and elders in connexion with the Free Church of Scotland had been formed to endea-

your to bring that body to occupy this ground. Hitherto their labours seem to have been without the effect desired, yet we hope they will not be discontinued, as no more important service could be rendered to the cause of God in our day than to contribute to bring up the large Presbyterian bodies in these lands to such an acknowledgment, and perhaps to the ultimate renovation of these venerable deeds.

And, lastly, in the practical application of the principle of Covenant obligation, the Assembly, we firmly believe, will yet be led to *renounce its present connexion with antichristian civil powers*. The political position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in these lands, and her complete separation from all that is anti-Christian, both in the Church and in the State, is one of her most distinguishing practical peculiarities, and one of her greatest moral glories. Her position in this respect was deliberately taken. Our fathers, recognising the Scriptural character of the Second Reformation, both in Church and in State, in which both bound themselves by solemn oath for ever to maintain our Presbyterian Covenanted religion, and remembering that the Covenants were appointed to be taken as part of the coronation oath, by which the relation betwixt sovereign and subject was thenceforward to be regulated and the civil administration conducted, could not see how—when the nation broke away from its engagements—abjured its oath—burned its Covenants—set up and established the very systems it had vowed to extirpate—exalted to places of power and trust the vilest persecutors, whose hands were yet reeking with the blood of God's saints—and last and worst of all, imposed, as tests of office, oaths binding the swearer to own what in Covenant he had already abjured, and conscientiously support the very abominations that are based on the destruction of reformation attainments—under these circumstances they could not see how they could hold any political connexion with Britain, and go deliberately with the nation in its apostacy, and at the same time be faithful to their vows to the Redeemer. They therefore always steadily refused to swear any oaths of allegiance to the British government, or on the condition of such oaths to hold office under it, so as to incorporate actively with a complex, unscriptural, and perjured State, bearing the names of blasphemy on its very constitution, and drunk with the blood of God's saints (for the shedding of which it has never repented), and therefore evidently anti-Christian in its character. Actively and conscientiously to support such a system, they held no consistent Presbyterian could swear, especially if he claimed any relation to the martyr Church that freely spilled her blood rather than avow loyalty or swear allegiance to such a system of iniquity. Nor, on the same principle, could they accept of any endowments (though repeatedly in their offer) from a State whose whole constitution and policy were directly in subversion of a system for which they had bound themselves unceasingly to testify. While, however, they held that during the prevalence of anti-Christianism in Europe, the true position of Christ's witnesses was not incorporation, but separation, they professed and showed their readiness at all times, in their several places, to promote the ends of good government, and the prosperity of the commonwealth, as far as they could do so without submitting to any sinful condition. Now this position thus deliberately taken, and steadily maintained, is still our position. Our testimony and practice remain unchanged. We hold as firmly, and assert as strongly, as ever, the utter inconsistency of Presbyterians (especially if they claim to be Covenanters) swearing oaths of allegiance, and thus binding themselves

conscientiously to support what they must believe to be wrong, or by active incorporation with a system founded on the ruins of our Covenanted Presbyterianism as a national institution, becoming sharers in the nation's guilt, and partakers in her punishment. We hold as firmly as our fathers also the inconsistency of Presbyterian congregations receiving from such a State endowment for their ministers. These endowments are given by an anti-Christian State, on an *infidel* principle. It cannot and does not give them on the principle of *supporting and extending the truth*, but on the infidel principle *that there is no truth*. And, therefore, truth and error, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, Protestantism and Popery, evangelical religion and the grossest idolatry, are all equally recognised as *having a claim* to be cherished and supported. And thus when it did the Presbyterian Church in Ireland the wonderful favour (as was boasted)* of allowing her *two* Presbyterian chaplains, it granted just *nineteen* to the Church of Rome. Now the acceptance by orthodox bodies of such endowments, so vile in the principle on which they are given, and the acquiescing in and active promoting by Presbyterians, both in and out of Parliament, of such arrangements as encourage and support government in its support of error, cannot but have an evil tendency. When Presbyterians clamour for and accept their share of such heterogenous State spoils, they more or less sanction the principle on which they are given, and confirm civil rulers in their political infidelity. The recipients, too, are prevented from so faithfully testifying against, and labouring to have withdrawn, national supports given to Popery and other errors, lest their own endowments should be endangered. This was unmistakably seen in the late general election, when Presbyterian parties and Presbyterian candidates did not scruple to court the assistance of Roman Catholics, on the understanding that if the Presbyterian candidates were elected they would support the endowments to Maynooth, or at least not oppose them; and, true to their promise, support them they did. But above all, these endowments have sadly destroyed Christian liberality, and right views of duty, in supporting the ministry among the Presbyterian people. This was to be expected. The minister was supported almost independently of the people, what he received from the congregation being merely nominal in some cases, and in others where the congregation numbered hundreds of families, seldom rising above the paltry £35, the government qualification. We know that it has been often asserted how useful

* We have watched, with great interest, the progress of the Chaplaincy question in the Assembly. While, however, we most cordially applaud the firmness of the majority in not yielding a point which they rightly believed to contain an important principle, we most anxiously desire to see them brought to take higher ground in the matter than they have yet occupied. It is undoubtably the right of God's Church, in such cases, not only to *recommend* but to *appoint* to spheres of spiritual labour. We think the principle is very plain whether it apply to the Chaplaincy of a Regiment, a Jail, or a Workhouse. The parties to whom the Chaplain is to minister, to preach, to dispense baptism, and administer the Lord's Supper, and, in fact, perform all the duties of a pastor, are the recognised members of the church of which he is a minister. If such members were in an organised state, they would undoubtedly have the right of choosing their own pastor. But failing that, it belongs to the Presbytery or Spiritual Court, under whose care they are, to provide and send them a minister. (Acts xi., 22, 23) Now, for any Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly to surrender this spiritual right and function into the hands of the War-office, Poor-law Commissioners, or any other civil body, is *patronage*, as plainly as anything can be.—Nor does it mend the matter to be able to show that, in many cases, this has been done already. A thousand errors would not—though quoted as precedents—sanctify or make right a single step in the wrong direction.

these endowments have been in establishing and maintaining congregations where they could not otherwise have existed. But it is a fact that statistics could easily be quoted to prove that if the Presbyterian people had been or were contributing as they should—if they were contributing to the support of the Gospel in proportion to their numbers and means, even in the ratio in which Covenanters contribute, their ministers, without any endowments, would be receiving more than they now receive, endowments and all, and abundant means would be provided to establish and support more congregations than ever have been forced into a sickly and struggling existence by the help of *Regium Donum*, often obtained by the most miserable shifts, and sometimes by contrivances neither very honourable nor very honest. We have not the slightest hesitation in affirming that the most effectual way the Assembly could take to bring up congregations to a right Scriptural standard of ministerial support, would be to throw up their endowments; and not only, we are persuaded, would such a step prove a signal blessing to that body, but it would do more than anything that has been accomplished in our day to unite and consolidate into one firm phalanx the different Presbyterian bodies in Ireland.

All these steps, we are fully persuaded, our Presbyterian brethren will yet take; thousands of their own members would rejoice to see them taking them at once. To none of them is the body more opposed than it once was to things for which Covenanters were ridiculed, but which it has now adopted as steps of reform, and till these steps are fully taken we hold that our testimony is still needed *in their presence*.

But we shall now look at the *third* question raised, namely—Has the Assembly or any of its members a right to be regarded as now occupying the same ground as the Covenanting church, and consequently to call themselves Covenanters. Dr. Edgar says of his Church, that “she is bearing the *same testimony for truth before the world* as our Covenanted brethren;” and Dr. Cooke asserts that “He is as deep a Covenanter as any of them.” Besides, it is now so customary for the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church to speak of themselves as Covenanters, and exultingly boast about “Covenanting forefathers” and the “blue banner of the Covenant,” that it is really high time that the question be fairly put before the world. What relationship to the Covenanted martyrs does the Assembly ecclesiastically hold? and does the blue banner wave over her ranks as her members declare? That this question may be fairly settled, we must observe that, of course, the term *Covenanter* always means a *contracting party* in a covenant. Now, it is obvious that when we speak of persons being Covenanters, the term may be used in a more general sense, or in one more limited and specific. In its general sense, it might properly be applied to the contracting parties in any federal arrangement whatever, and more especially it might be properly applied to all true believers who in Christ have laid hold on the Covenant of Grace. But in the ecclesiastical history of these lands the term Covenanter has a limited ecclesiastical meaning, being used to designate those who entered into and became contracting parties—first, in the National Covenant of Scotland, and afterwards in the Solemn League and Covenant. Now, it is in this ecclesiastical sense of one claiming to be a contracting party in these National Covenants, that the term Covenanter is employed as an ecclesiastical designation. In the general sense of the term, as implying simply to be believers in Christ, we have no doubt but that Dr. Cooke, and we hope all the

members of the Assembly, are Covenanters. But we have no idea whatever that Dr. Cooke used the term in that general sense, or that he fell into the mistake lately committed by a brother of his in the ministry, who argued that the motto on the Old Covenanters' banner—"For Christ's Crown and Covenant"—did not refer to the Solemn League and Covenant at all, but merely to the Covenant of Redemption!! We cannot think that Dr. Cooke could throw dust into the eyes of the members of his own Church by any such quibble as that of designedly using the term in one sense, while he knew that it would be understood in the other. We take it for granted, then, that Dr. Cooke used the term in its ordinary ecclesiastical signification, and, if so, whatever may be Dr. Cooke's own private views and sentiments, we would certainly hesitate to admit that, in ecclesiastical standing, he could be called a Covenanter. If he holds the perpetual obligation on himself, and on these lands, of the Solemn League and Covenant, and thus believes himself a contracting party in that solemn deed as a matter of private opinion and judgment, it is so far well. Unfortunately, we are scarcely in a position to give the doctor the benefit of a doubt on this point. It was he, we think, who, in a meeting of the General Assembly, some years ago, declared that "*he owned no Covenant that would bind him to seek the extirpation of Prelacy.*" This he said in the most public manner, in the face of the supreme court of his Church, and the saying passed without rebuke. Possibly, indeed, he may have changed his mind on the subject since then, inasmuch as he claims the credit of being "as deep a Covenanter as any of us." We hope he has, and, if so, we gladly accord him the name Covenanter as an individual; but that makes nothing for the body ecclesiastically considered. It does not, and Dr. Cooke, as a part of it, does not recognise the perpetual obligation of this Covenant in any ecclesiastical formula; and how the Solemn League could be referred to in the opening sermon at the Assembly, as one of the Assembly's "standards," we are at a loss to understand. We know some have been so silly as to assert that, in acknowledging the Confession of Faith, there is an acknowledgment of all that is bound up in the volume, usually bearing that name, the Solemn League among the rest; but how foolish such an assertion is we learn from what one of the Assembly's ministers has lately told, through the press, his opponent and the world, namely—that Presbyterian ministers are not bound even to the Catechisms, as standards, but simply to the chapters of the Confession.

But does not the Assembly require its ministers at ordination to "acknowledge the moral obligation of public religious Covenanting?" Yes, verily, but that does not make them Covenanters. To acknowledge a thing to be right and proper in itself does not necessarily imply that the person making the acknowledgment is engaged in it. For example, a person might approve of the principles on which a contract was made, holding them to be morally right and binding on the parties concerned, and yet not be a contractor; so might he approve of religious Covenanting, and of a particular example of it as being morally right and proper in itself, and as binding on the parties originally concerned, and yet not be a Covenanter. And this is just about as far as the Assembly's ministers are disposed to go. They acknowledge religious Covenanting to be right, and speak of the British Covenants as having been useful and good on the part of our fathers in their circumstances, and if ever we were to be similarly circumstanced, they think we might properly enter into a Solemn League and Covenant too, and then complacently ask what further

we have to do with vows uttered and oaths sworn more than two hundred years ago. Now, it is worthy of remark, that the Presbyterian body in Ireland, for a length of time after the Solemn League was sworn in 1644, did bind her ministers and members to an acknowledgment of its obligation on themselves and posterity. For a length of time, too, the Seceders did the same. But, in process of time, both parties left that ground, feeling, as they must have done, the utter inconsistency of such an acknowledgment with the political relationship into which they have entered with the British Government. And now the two parties who had thus both left the Covenant ground have agreed to substitute for an acknowledgment of the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant a vague general expression about religious Covenanting in the abstract, that, in fact, practically means nothing, though it may lead the ignorant to suppose that those using it may still occupy their former position, and in which the national deeds are not so much as named or referred to. Now, we hold that it is self-evident that, as a contractor must be a party bound by a contract, so a Covenanter must be a party bound in a Covenant, and, while the General Assembly in no one of her formulas avows her belief that she and these lands are bound in the British Covenants, and, moreover, has never gone about an act of public religious Covenanting herself, how can her members in any fairness be styled Covenanters? It is just simply ridiculous.

The Free Church of Scotland is precisely in a similar position. She has steadily refused, hitherto, by any public act or deed, to testify for the descending obligation of the Covenants, and one of her leading ministers is reported as having spoken at a public meeting, what accurately describes her position and that of the Irish Assembly. Referring to the arbitrary measures of Government, that forced the members of the Free Church to abandon the Establishment, he declared that Government had compelled them to unfurl again the banner borne by the Church of old. "The breeze," he adds, "has blown it open in our hands as far as Christ's Crown—and if the Government persevere and the breeze wax stronger, we may in time get the length of the Covenant too." A plain acknowledgment, that the Free Church is not the length of the Covenant yet, and, in fact, that the good old banner of blue, displaying "*Christ's Covenant*" as well as "Christ's Crown," does not float over her or the Irish Assembly at all. Till the Assembly comes to revive the Covenants and formally acknowledge their obligation, such fine phrases as our "Covenanting forefathers," and "The blue banner of the Covenant," may do very well to grace a sentence, or round a period, or serve as meretricious adornments for a political harangue; but as identifying the parties employing them with our Covenants, or with the suffering Covenanters of old, they simply mean nothing at all.

Nor has the Assembly any right to the designation on the ground of progenitors. Of course, we speak not of natural or lineal, but of ecclesiastical progenitors. Their ecclesiastical progenitors, with whom they stand clearly identified in history, and with whom their present political connexions clearly identify them, were the party in Scotland that accepted the indulgences, and who were too intent on interest and ease to think of martyrdom for the cause of Christ. And with these they stand clearly in history related to, and identified with, the pliant party of Presbyterians in Ireland, who, when laws were made against non-conformity, especially when afraid that the "Conventicle Act" would be applied to Ireland,

thought prudence the better part of valour, and are extolled by Adair, "because they thought it better to be doing something among the people in a *more private way* as the *times could bear*, than *expose themselves and the people to present suffering*." These were the men who condemned and came to an open rupture with Alexander Peden and others, because they were more faithful than themselves, and as the historian remarks, "called the people in the country to more public assemblings than the ministers of the country *judged expedient in the times*," and these pliant, prudent men, who took good care that they themselves should be safe, let the Gospel be preached or not, are claimed by the Assembly itself as its ecclesiastical progenitors. Neither of the parties, however, either in Scotland or Ireland, with which the Assembly stands identified, had any inclination to exhibit so much faithfulness as would expose them to the danger of martyrdom. Instead of that they incessantly loaded the rigid Covenanters, as Cargill, and Cameron, and Peden, with every term of reproach, because they persevered in preaching the Gospel in the face of royal proclamations, forbidding them, on the authority of an assumed royal supremacy, to serve their Master in Heaven. When members of the Assembly, therefore, speak of such sufferers for the Gospel as belonging to them they commit a gross historical blunder, that a more careful study of the historians of their own Church would materially help to rectify. We commend to such tyros in ecclesiastical history a little attention to Hetherington and Reid, and they will learn to speak more accurately about Covenanted forefathers.

But, moreover, if members of the Assembly be Covenanters, and claim the martyrs as their own, then surely they must *hold the points for which the martyrs suffered*. Now, will they do so? The martyrs suffered because they would not *disown the Covenants*, often put to them as a test. But the Assembly does not hold the Covenants; though Irish Presbyterians once owned them, they have now quietly let them drop. The martyrs suffered because they would not *admit the king's supremacy*. Irish Presbyterians, while holding in the abstract the supremacy of Christ, yet swear allegiance to, and bind themselves conscientiously to support, the British monarch, though, by the constitution, head of all things civil and ecclesiastical in these lands. The martyrs suffered because they would not *submit to own Prelacy, abjure in Covenant, nor hear the curates*. Presbyterians *swear conscientiously to support Prelacy*, as an integral part of that constitution to which they pledge their loyalty. A high authority defines an oath of allegiance as just "a reciprocating by the subject of the coronation oath." Whatever, therefore, the monarch swears to do in his coronation oath, an oath of allegiance binds the swearer to support and help him in doing.—According to another, an oath of allegiance is "a pledge to give all loyalty and obedience to the *extent of the constitution*." Whatever, then, the constitution requires the monarch to do, an oath of allegiance is a pledge on the part of the subject that he will dutifully obey the monarch in carrying into effect. But the British constitution binds the monarch to support Prelacy, and consequently an oath of allegiance binds Irish Presbyterians dutifully to obey and support the monarch in doing the very thing which the martyrs, rather than do, submitted to death. But why multiply particulars? The same rule, applied by our Lord when the Jews claimed to be the children of Abraham, settles the whole matter—"This did not Abraham." So we say—*This did not the martyrs*.

But, in the name of common sense, why should members of the Assembly pride themselves in being called or thought Covenanters? The term long was and still is in many places used as a term of reproach, and even Presbyterians have often been heard to say that they liked everything about Covenanters but the name, and we know of parties actually kept out of the Reformed Presbyterian Church because they could not bring themselves to be called Covenanters. Why, then, so anxious to bear our reproach? Would they rob us of our very infamy and shame? It would not much surprise us if some member of the Assembly should gravely propose to call the members of his Church "Cameronians," or "Mountain Men," or "Society People," all which long were, and in some places still are, applied to those in the communion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church as epithets of derision, and any or all of which members of the Assembly might appropriate with as much truthful claim, and with as much historical propriety, as that of Covenanter.

In conclusion, we would not be afraid to go with our case, however imperfectly pled, before any jury of impartial men, and on all the three points raised have a verdict of proved. At the same time, we wish no controversy with brethren in the Assembly. Many of them we honour and love. In every step of advance we cheer them on, and in every work of usefulness (and they are engaged in many) we most cordially wish them God speed. But we feel that it would be wrong to allow any man to use the offensive and arrogant style of speaking, respecting a sister Church, older and as much honoured for usefulness as his own, assumed by various members of the Assembly, without rebuking it as it deserves. And we are most happy to inform Dr. Edgar, and all others who may be expecting our speedy decease, that our Church never was in better health and spirits—that our affairs never were more prosperous, or our members more sincerely and devotedly attached to our great distinguishing principles, and that we have not the slightest notion of dying out, just to please Dr. Edgar and the Assembly. Instead, we hope to enjoy a green old age—see our unhappy divisions healed, and the Covenanted witnesses one firm phalanx, as of old. Moreover, we are not Separatists through love of schism. We are pledged in our Covenant to promote unity and uniformity, and, in the terms of our late Act of Covenant Renovation, "we firmly trust that divisions shall cease, and the people of God become one Catholic Church over all the earth." We are, therefore, ready for union with any who occupy as fully as ourselves the ground covered by the Second Reformation. Let the Assembly own the obligation of our Covenants, and renew them, in testimony of its adherence, as we have done, and then bring its political and ecclesiastical connexions into consistency with such a step, and we are ready for union. Nor does there remain a doubt on our mind that the time is coming when the Presbyterian and evangelical bodies in these lands will be constrained, in self-defence, to revive the Solemn League, and when they shall find, as of old, that Covenanting with God is the best bulwark against the enemy and the best preparation for suffering—"Christ's Crown and Covenant"—the best watch-word of union—the best banner for truth that ever waved on God's Covenanted hosts; and as martyrs foretold—"THE COVENANTS, THE COVENANTS WILL YET BE THE REVIVING OF BRITAIN."